



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian
Northern District of New York

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Hartunian Becomes United States Attorney

Syracuse, New York – Today at 1:00 p.m., Hon. Norman A. Mordue, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of New York, administered oaths of office to Andrew T. Baxter, who became a United States Magistrate Judge, and Richard S. Hartunian, who succeeds Baxter as United States Attorney. On December 23, 2009, President Obama nominated Hartunian to become United States Attorney for the Northern District of New York and sent the nomination to the United States Senate for its advice and consent. Hartunian serves in an interim status pending Senate confirmation.

Hartunian, age 48, has been an Assistant United States Attorney since 1997, serving as the Northern District's Narcotics Chief and Organized Crime Drug Task Force Coordinator since 2006. He is a 1983 graduate of Georgetown University and 1986 graduate of Albany Law School of Union University. Prior to joining the U.S. Attorney's Office, Hartunian served as an Assistant District Attorney for the Office of District Attorney in Albany County and worked in private practice.

Hartunian has prosecuted numerous large drug and gang cases, including the racketeering case his office successfully brought against 30 members and associates of the notoriously violent Jungle Junkies street gang, based in the so-called uptown neighborhoods of West Hill and Arbor Hill

in Albany, New York.

Baxter, age 53, had served as the Acting and Interim United States Attorney since September 5, 2008. He was an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Northern District of New York from 1988, primarily prosecuting “white collar” offenses. Baxter served as Senior Litigation Counsel (1999 - 2002), Chief of the Criminal Division (2002 - 2006), and First Assistant U.S. Attorney (2006 - 2008). He was an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the District of New Jersey from 1984 through 1988, after engaging in the private practice of law in Philadelphia for three years. Baxter graduated from Princeton University with an A.B. in Economics in 1978 and from Harvard Law School in 1981. As a United States Magistrate Judge in the Northern District of New York, Baxter will handle a wide variety of federal court matters to assist U.S. District Court Judges. Magistrate Judges oversee certain preliminary proceedings in civil and felony criminal cases; misdemeanor criminal cases and civil cases on consent; prisoner civil rights and habeas litigation; and Social Security appeals.

The United States Attorneys serve as the nation's principal litigators, under the direction of the Attorney General and the U.S. Department of Justice. There is one United States Attorney for each judicial district in the United States and its territories. The primary statutory responsibilities of United States Attorneys are: the prosecution of federal criminal cases; the prosecution and defense of civil cases in which the United States is a party; and the collection of debts owed the federal government which are administratively uncollectible.

The Northern District of New York is comprised of thirty-two counties in upstate New York, covering an area of over 30,000 square miles that is home to about 3.4 million people. The United States Attorney has offices in Syracuse, Albany, Binghamton and Plattsburgh.

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